

is living—a divorced woman., going about under
an assumed
name, a bad woman preying upon life, as I know
you now to
be—rather than that, I was ready to supply you
with money
to pay bill after bill, extravagance after
extravagance,
risk what occurred yesterday, the first quarrel
I have ever
had with my wife. You don't understand what
that means
to me. How could you? But I tell you that
the only
bitter words that ever came from those sweet
lips of hers
were on your account, and I hate to see you
next her. You
sully the innocence that is in her. [*Moves L*
C.~] And then
I used to think that with all your faults you
were frank and
honest. You are not.

Mrs. Erlynne. Why do you say that ?

Lord Windermere. You made me get you an
invitation to my
wife's ball.

Mrs. Erlynne. For my daughter's ball—yes.

Lord Windermere. You came, and within an hour of
your leaving
the house you are found in a man's rooms—you
are disgraced
before every one. [*Goes up*
stage C.]

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes.

Lord Windermere. [*Turning round on her.*]
Therefore I have a
right to look upon you as what you are—a
worthless, vicious
woman. I have the right to tell you never to
enter this
house, never to attempt to come near my wife

"Mrs. Erlynne. [Coldly.] My daughter, you mean.

Lord Windermere. You have no right to claim her
as your
daughter. You left her, abandoned her when
she was but
a child in the cradle, abandoned her for your
lover, who
abandoned you in turn.

Mrs. Erlynne. [Rising.] Do you count that to his
credit, Lord
Windermere—or to mine?

Lord Windermere. To his, now that I know you.

Mrs. Erlynne. Take care—you had better be
careful.

Lord Windermere. Oh, I am not going to mince
words for you.
I know you thoroughly.

Mrs. Erlynne. [Looking steadily at him.] I
question that.

Lord Windermere. I do know you. For twenty
years of your
life you lived without your child, without a
thought of your
child. One day you read in the papers that she
had married
a rich man. You saw your hideous chance. You
knew that
to spare her the ignominy of learning that a
woman like
you was her mother, I would endure anything.
You began
your blackmailing.